

A young woman with curly hair, wearing a denim jacket and white earbuds, is looking off to the side in a city street. The background is blurred, showing other people and buildings.

Assessment of BTEC qualifications in 2021/2022 - a transition year

Information for Schools and Colleges

This academic year external assessments are taking place for the first time since the Covid-19 pandemic began.

Ofqual (and other regulators), the Department for Education (England) and Awarding Organisations, like Pearson, recognise the difficulties learners have faced since 2020, and changes have been made to this year's arrangements to support them.

Ofqual has **set out their plans** for awarding qualifications in 2022 and intend to return to a normal, pre-pandemic, approach to grading standards by 2023. They have confirmed that 2022 will be a transition year, to reflect that we are in a pandemic recovery period and students' education has been disrupted.

We would like to assure you that our guiding principle and approach to awarding BTEC qualification results in 2022 will be to ensure BTEC learners are not disadvantaged or advantaged in comparison to peers doing A levels/GCSEs.

BTEC courses have a different structure and design to academic qualifications - BTECs are modular qualifications (with assessments taking place throughout the course) compared to GCSEs and A levels which are linear (assessed and awarded at the same time at the end of the year). It's important to note that the impact of awarding Centre and Teacher Assessed Grades over the past two years on overall outcomes has differed between qualification type and even subject. So, while we will work to apply the same principles set out by Ofqual for BTEC learners completing their qualifications in summer 2022, our approach needs to be different. This document explains the approach we're taking to ensure a safety net for students completing their studies this year.

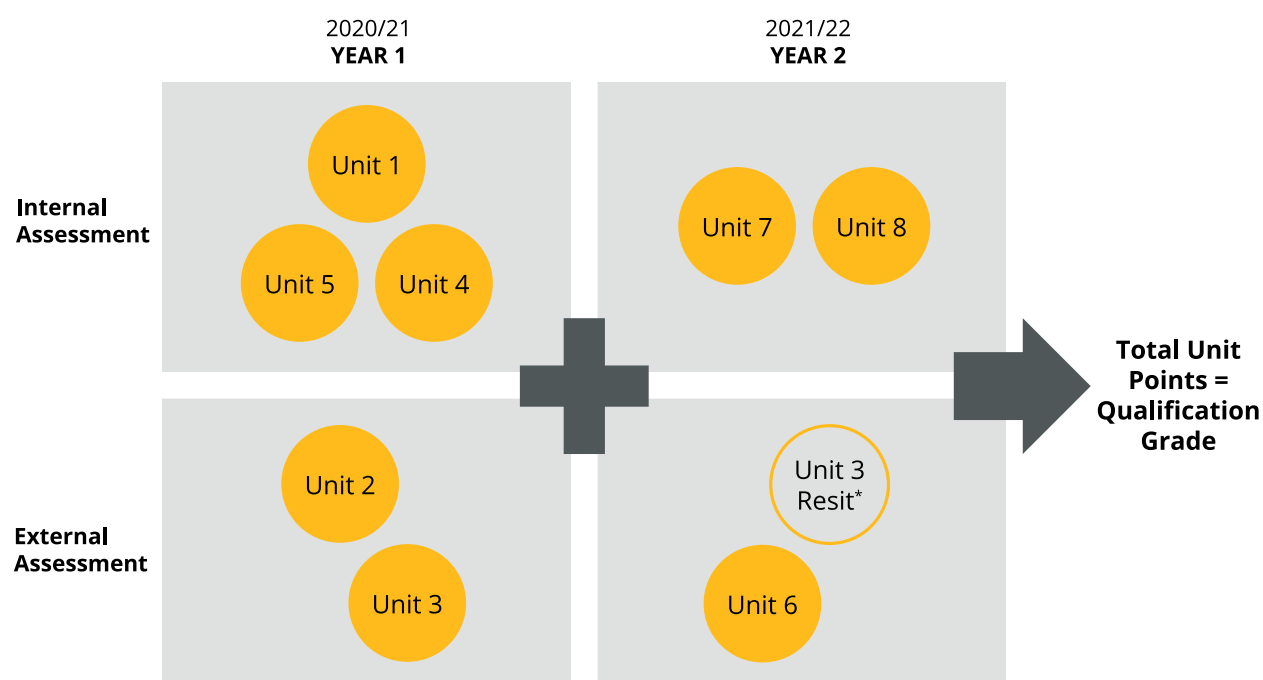
Awarding BTEC qualification grades in 2022

In a normal year, BTEC qualifications are a mixture of internal and external assessments. For Level 3 BTEC Nationals, for example, most qualifications are made up of around 60% of internally assessed units, which are assessed by schools and colleges and quality assured by Pearson. External assessments (usually around 40% of the qualification) are set, marked, and awarded by Pearson.

We are returning to the normal qualification grading process for this academic year, which is shown below.

How BTEC qualifications grades are awarded

This example is a Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Diploma (720)



**Some learners will 'resit' their external assessment, the highest grade and points will carry forward to the qualification grade*

This is a simple example of how a BTEC grade would be awarded over two years. As they are flexible, modular qualifications they can be completed over a number of years and there are many variations.

Each completed unit has its own individual grade, and a points score that can be carried from one year to the next. These points are then added up to award a qualification grade.

Points required for each qualification grade can be found in the qualification specification, and vary depending on the size of the qualification.

This year we are returning to issuing qualification grades based on the points score required within the specification, and also issuing unit grades (via the Notification of Performance).

Adaptations to Assessment in 2022 - a comprehensive package of support has been put in place for students

Following guidance from DfE and Ofqual, we have put in place some key adaptations to BTEC internal and external assessments in recognition of the varied disruption to the delivery of education since 2020.

The table below sets out what we've put in place to provide this safety net for students.

Disruption	Contingency plan
BTEC learners missed assessment in 2020/21 academic year, due to disruption	'Unit-Level Teacher Assessed Grades' were permitted for all assessments that were due to (but couldn't) take place in 2020/2021.
BTEC learners may need further teaching to cover content that was not delivered in 2021/22	Reduction of the assessment within Internally Assessed Units – the unit grades awarded by teachers or tutors can be streamlined, and based on assessment of one learning aim or objective rather than 3-4.
BTEC learners were absent from planned external assessments in 2022	The Special Consideration process means learners who unavoidably miss external assessments can be awarded unit grades by Pearson to ensure they can certificate in 2022.
Managing external unit-level results for modular BTEC qualifications, in advance of summer qualification results for linear General Qualifications	We will use a range of evidence to set grade boundaries for the external units. Part of this evidence will be to closely monitor learner performance in all assessments that contribute to their final qualification grade, to ensure BTEC learners are not disadvantaged or advantaged in comparison to peers doing A levels/ GCSEs.

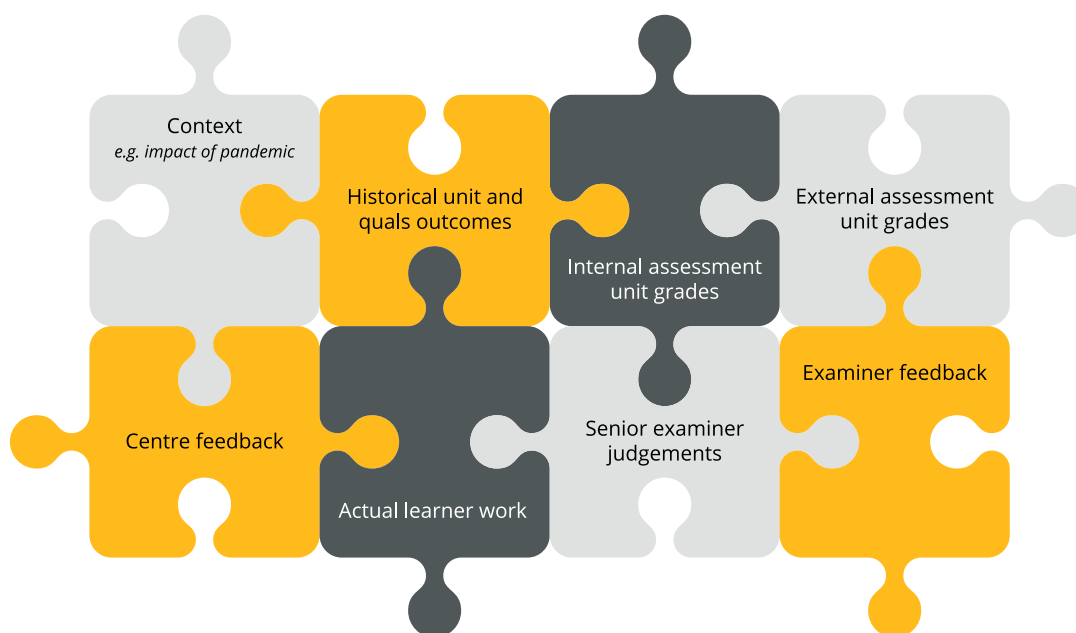
How we will set Grade Boundaries for External Assessments in Summer 2022

A group of subject matter and technical assessment experts set new grade boundaries after each external assessment has taken place. They review a range of evidence (both qualitative and quantitative) to ensure that there is fairness, validity and robustness in the grade boundaries recommended. The types of evidence included are:

- Review of the work produced by learners
- The difficulty of the assessment compared to previous assessments
- A range of statistical evidence including how learners completing the assessment have performed compared to previous years
- The impact of unit grades, for all learners, on the overall qualification grade. (These BTEC national unit grades include UTAGs from the last academic year and streamlined internal assessment).

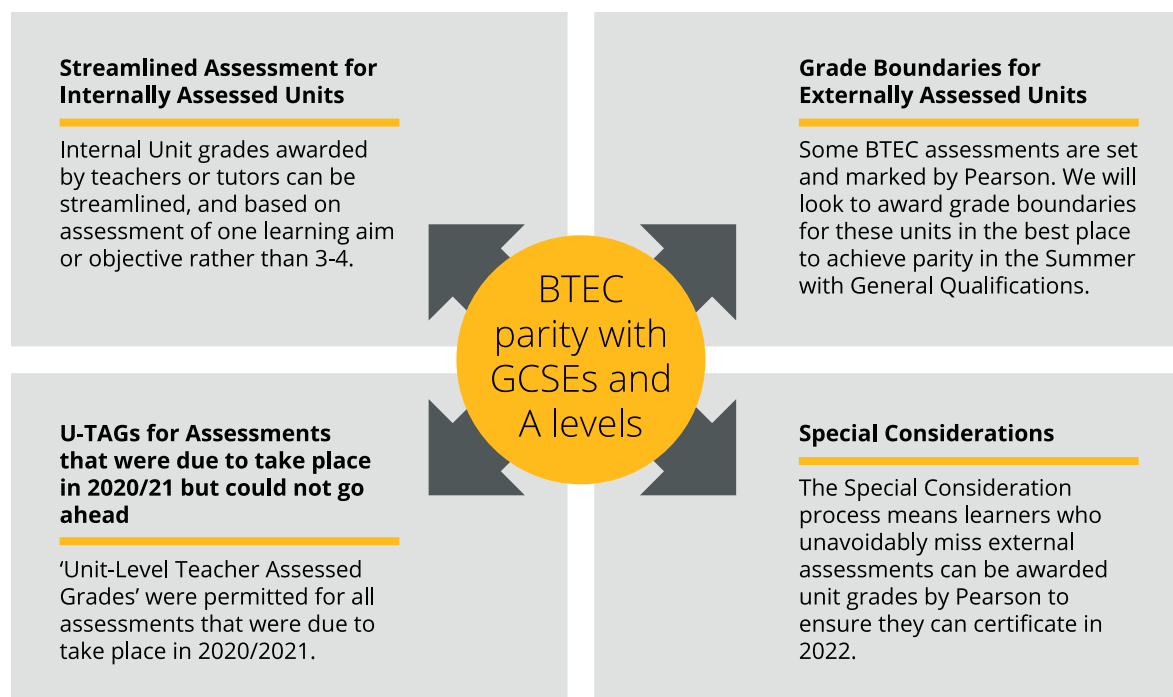
The subject experts make a final recommendation considering all the available pieces of evidence, which for this academic year will also be the context in which exams have been sat.

Unit-level External Assessment Grade Boundaries

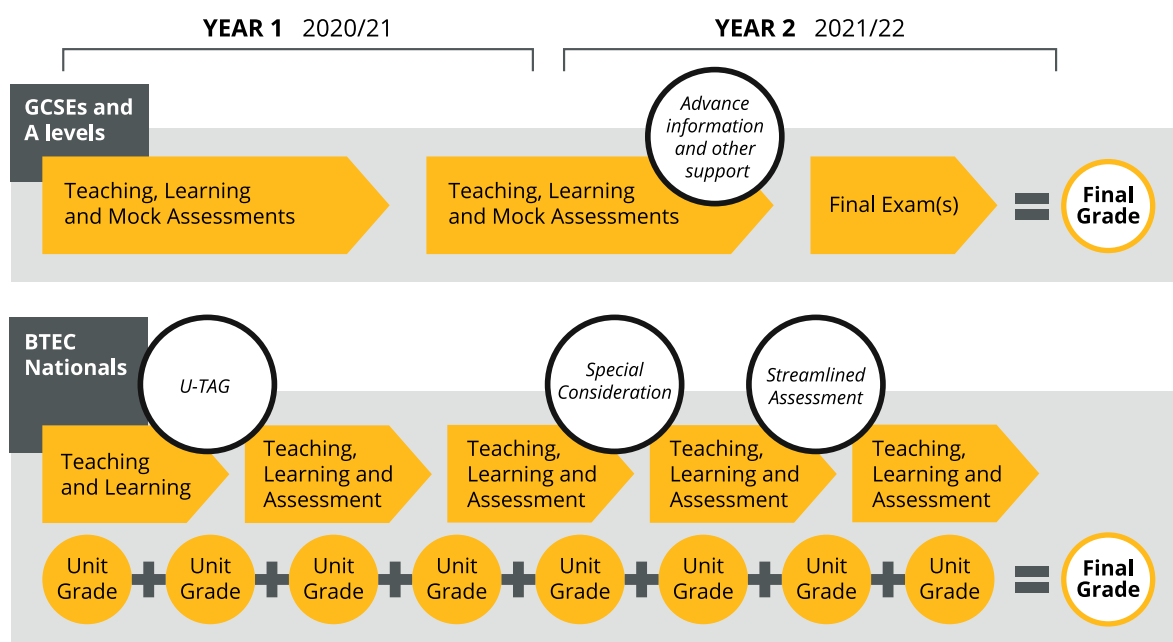


Our aim is to ensure BTEC learners are not disadvantaged or advantaged in comparison to peers doing A levels/GCSEs at qualification-level as far as possible, so whilst you may hear about grade boundaries for GCSEs and A levels, this is used to describe reaching decisions on the entire qualification outcome. For BTECs, grade boundary decisions are only made for external assessments which, as you're aware, make up a smaller proportion of the entire qualification (around 40%). This means, in order to ensure BTEC learners are not disadvantaged or advantaged in comparison to peers doing A levels/GCSEs, we consider how the unit-level grade boundaries for BTEC external assessments combine with internally assessed unit outcomes, to create the overall qualification grade.

The package of support in place to support BTEC students in 2022



An overview of the packages of support in place for academic and vocational qualifications



At a glance - awarding BTECs in 2022

Ofqual has announced that 2022 will be a transition year, to reflect that we are in a pandemic recovery period and students' education has been disrupted. This principle is being applied to BTECs and other similar vocational qualifications, as well as GCSEs and A levels.

The basis of our awarding approach to BTECs this year is to ensure it is as fair as possible for all learners.

Exams will go ahead in 2022, and so we are returning to the usual method of calculating the qualification results, but pandemic related adaptations are in place to provide a comprehensive package of support for students.

Pearson BTEC will be taking a range of evidence into account from 2021 through to 2022 when issuing final grades to learners completing in 2022, in recognition that this is a 'transition year' back to pre-pandemic standards.

Further details and updates on the 2022 exams series can be found on our [website](#) and via our social media channels